Founding Fathers of CVJHWA: Haskell Henson(Selma)

**The Beginning:**

In the late 1970’s Central Valley Jr. High Wrestling was very limited. There was no CVJHWA. NorCal TOC was only a baby in its first few years of launch where slim to none of Central Valley teams attended... truthfully, there were too few Central Valley teams that existed. This did not stop a few determined coaches to help build their sport in the farming towns of Selma and Kingsburg and surrounding communities. Wrestling became the next staple crop grown in these small farming towns. Heskell Henson of Selma along with Mr. Bonilla of Kingsburg made sure of that.

**Heskell Henson of Roosevelt MS in Selma: Dynasty in the making!**

In the mid to late 1970’s, wrestling roots in Central California were budding that has become a powerhouse sport in the farming capital of the world. Mr. Henson’s vision to give of him to this sport started with the creation of Central Valley Jr. High Wrestling Association. As a founding father of this Association, Mr. Henson’s main goal was to give an organized sport to his wrestlers but knew he could not do this by himself. Like any association today, you need other teams to help better your team. He soon organized coaches from Selma, Kingsburg, Reedley and other small farming communities in his area to create a small association where they could dual each other and have a post season. The premise was simple, mimic what was already in place in High School to give their youth wrestlers the same experience they would soon see. CVJHWA was created to give their wrestlers a great chance at becoming great people.

In the initial years, there were very few teams around. High School wrestling had little to no school support then so Jr. High wrestling received little to no attention. That didn’t stop Mr. Henson’s view that more could be done. Starting an association of teams, where those involved helped each other become better, was a no brainer. Soon, with just a few teams involved, dual matches were created to get the season going. By the 1977-78 season, when the 1st league and divisional champions were crowned, there was a rivalry between teams and rivalries between wrestlers already brewing. This personal and team rivalry led to many great matches that helped the sport of wrestling grow in the small communities in this area. Soon thereafter, many young wrestlers were already thinking of what it took to get their skills to the next level. Soon the coaches involved were also doing the same.

**The 80’s:**

By the start of the 80’s, wrestling had grown a lot in the Selma/Kingsburg/Reedley area.

**The Wrestling Tree:**

Heskell Henson’s vision to get his wrestlers the best he could was not only achieved, but has left an astounding lineage in Selma. The wrestling family tree of Selma consists of great wrestlers many around the state know of: Diego Quintana, Nick Quintana, Gary Quintana, Ismael Quintana, Mike Morin, Robert Zapata, the Zarate Brothers, Dr. Rick Ravalian, Dr. BJ Bonilla (Kingsburg MS coach’s son), Eric Legareta, Eric and Joseph Mares were a few of many. Many of his wrestlers went on to do great things for the small farming town of Selma. The kids these gentlemen have coached have and are currently doing amazing things on the local, state and national wrestling scene. Heskell Henson’s vision to make his team better, make his area better can be seen through the wrestlers he coached then. His everlasting work through the association can be seen now as CVYWA is seeing a record number of its members attend college. Mr. Henson’s vision is not only a success but should be recognized and appreciated by not only Selma but anyone who has been a part of the association he helped launch almost 40 years ago.